



**March 2, 2005**

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### **Message from the Assistant Secretary: Introducing HHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt**

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I am delighted to introduce to you my new boss, Secretary Michael O. Leavitt. Secretary Leavitt was sworn in as the 20<sup>th</sup> Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on January 26, 2005. Prior to his current service, Secretary Leavitt served as Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Governor of Utah.

Secretary Leavitt brings an exciting new perspective and leadership style to the Department of Health and Human Services. He is known for implementing a management style characterized by "en Librium" or "working toward the middle." He is a coalition-builder and a collaborator. I look forward to the opportunity we have to build a consensus to meet not only the challenges of an aging society, but to find common practical solutions.

Josefina G. Carbonell

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### **HHS Promotes New Medicare Preventive Benefits for Better Senior Health**

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On January 10<sup>th</sup>, HHS announced the availability of new Medicare preventive benefits designed to provide seniors with better care and a higher quality of life. HHS also announced a new collaboration on education and outreach with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services led by CMS Administrator Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D., and the leaders of the American Cancer Society, the American Diabetes Association and the American Heart Association. The campaign is designed to help maximize attention to Medicare's new preventive benefits and to help seniors use them. New Medicare beneficiaries now have the "Welcome to Medicare" physical exam, coupled with an increasingly broad set of preventive benefits that will include prescription drug coverage next year. These provide people with Medicare greater

access to more prevention-focused benefits than ever before. The services are key features of the Medicare Modernization Act, signed into law by President George W. Bush in December 2003. For more information visit:  
<http://www.dhhs.gov/news/press/2005pres/20050110.html>

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### **AoA News**

#### **AoA to Celebrate Long-Term Living in May During Older Americans Month**

Our nation is in the midst of a boom in the aging population. Older people are living longer and staying healthier and more active much later in life. In 2011 the first wave of the 78 million baby boom generation turns 65. The 2005 Older Americans

Month theme, "Celebrate Long-Term Living" was selected to recognize and honor the valuable contributions of older persons to their communities as they age. AoA is planning several activities and events in honor of Older Americans Month, including the development of a promotional kit and poster. For more information visit: <http://www.aoa.gov/press/oam/oam.asp>.

### **HHS Agency Wide Push for Competitive Grant Applications to be Submitted Electronically**

HHS is making every effort to facilitate access to federal grant funding opportunities. As a result of the success we've had, we are expanding capacity for electronic submittals, and encourage you to begin the process now before the deadline crunch. Grants.gov allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all Federal grant-making agencies. Grants.gov is the single access point for over 900 grant programs offered by the 26 Federal grant-making agencies. HHS is proud to be the managing partner for Grants.gov, an initiative that will have an unparalleled impact on the grant community. For more information visit: <http://www.aoa.gov/doingbus/grants/procedures-grants.doc>.

### **Evidence-Based Disability and Disease Prevention Workshop a Success**

Nearly 100 state team representatives, speakers, and resource staff participated in a highly successful two-day training workshop on December 6-7 in Chicago to enhance the ability of State and local policy makers and agency managers to promote the use of evidence-based disease prevention approaches in community programs for the elderly. The approaches discussed at the *Evidence-Based Disability and Disease Prevention for Elders: Translating Research into Community-Based Programs* workshop are intended for use in aging services provider organizations such as senior centers, adult day care programs, nutrition programs and senior housing projects. AoA joined four other HHS agencies to co-sponsor the workshop spearheaded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Other HHS sponsors included the National Institute on Aging, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Fourteen state teams selected from 45 applications participated in a workshop that generated much interest and excitement and provided useful networking opportunities among team members and across states. AoA will be working with AHRQ and the other sponsoring agencies to identify additional ways to get this information out to the network, and all of the key HHS agencies are working together to help advance the use of evidence-based programs at the community level. AoA will inform the aging network about how to access this information as soon as it becomes available.

### **White House Conference on Aging Update**

The 2005 White House Conference on Aging is receiving much public input for the Conference to be held October 23-26, 2005 in Washington, D.C. Since August 2004, the Policy Committee for the WHCoA has held 13 Listening sessions across the country and is scheduled to conduct more than 14 Solutions Forums and approximately nine Mini-Conferences to further refine the issues being raised in the WHCoA Agenda and to encourage the development of innovative solutions for some of the challenges that have been identified. The WHCoA has also designated more than 150 national, state and local events involving more than 45,000 individuals across the country. The reports generated by these events are helping the Policy Committee to draft resolutions which will be voted upon by the delegates later this year at the WHCoA. For more information visit: <http://www.whcoa.gov>.

## ***You Can!* Campaign Enrollment Continues to Climb**

The Administration on Aging has surpassed expectations by enrolling more than 1800 organizations in the *You Can! Steps to Healthier Aging* campaign in the first five months of the campaign. Launched on September 1, 2004 AoA aims to enroll 2,000 campaign partners by September 2006 to help spread the word about the importance of making healthier lifestyle choices. For more information visit:

[http://www.aoa.gov/youcan/partners\\_public/partners\\_progress.asp](http://www.aoa.gov/youcan/partners_public/partners_progress.asp)

## **Policy and Program Updates**

### **Revised Interim Influenza Vaccination Recommendations**

On January 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued revised interim recommendations for influenza vaccination during the 2004--05 season. CDC urged continued emphasis on vaccinating people at high risk for serious influenza-related complications. Where the local available supply is sufficient, they recommend that state and local health officials may broaden vaccine use to make the most effective use of their supply. CDC continues to recommend aggressive action to vaccinate people in priority groups including adults aged 65 years and greater. These priority groups also include groups added on December 22:

- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of persons in high-risk groups (e.g., persons aged  $\geq 65$  years; persons with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart or lung disease, or weakened immune systems because of illness or medication; and children aged  $< 2$  years); and
- All adults aged 50--64 years.

For more information visit: They can also be found online at

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccineshortage.htm>.

### **New Dietary Guidelines to Help Americans Make Better Food Choices, Live Healthier Lives**

The HHS Secretary and Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced on January 12 the release of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*, the federal government's science-based advice to promote health and reduce risk of chronic diseases through nutrition and physical activity. The sixth edition of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* places stronger emphasis on reducing calorie consumption and increasing physical activity. It emphasizes choosing a nutritious diet, maintaining a healthy weight, achieving adequate exercise, and "keeping foods safe" to avoid foodborne illness. This advice is particularly important for "Baby Boomers", older adults, and their caregivers. This joint project of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Agriculture is the latest of the five-year reviews required by federal law. It is the basis of federal food programs and nutrition education programs, including the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs through Titles III-C and VI and supports the nutrition and physical fitness pillars of President Bush's *HealthierUS* Initiative. The *2005 Dietary Guidelines*, consumer brochure, and related materials are available at [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines).

### **New Heart Truth Campaign Electronic Publication**

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has launched a new quarterly electronic publication about women and heart disease as part of *The Heart Truth* campaign entitled *The Heart Truth* eZine. NHLBI and partner organizations committed to the health and well-being of women, are sponsoring a national campaign called *The Heart Truth* to make women more aware of heart disease as their greatest health threat. The campaign's goal is to give women a personal and urgent wake-up call about their risk of heart disease. To subscribe and receive future issues of *The Heart Truth* eZine, please visit <http://network.nhlbi.nih.net/subscribe/htezine/subscribe.html>, or click on the "Receive Future Updates from *The Heart Truth*" graphic below. For more information about *The Heart Truth* campaign visit: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/hearttruth/index.htm>

### **Long-Term Care Awareness Campaign to Begin in Five States**

AoA is pleased to announce that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is working on a new Long-Term Care awareness campaign, in conjunction with the National Governors Association and the National Council of State Legislatures. The campaign is called: "*Own Your Future.*" It is a pilot project taking place in five states; Arkansas, Idaho, Nevada, New Jersey, and Virginia. The goal of the campaign is to increase awareness among retirees and near-retirees about the need to plan ahead for long-term care. Campaign activities began in January and will run until the end of May 2005. This long-term care awareness campaign builds upon the earlier work conducted by AoA's National Governor's Association Policy Academy and the National Conference of State Legislatures activities. For information about the pilot programs call the Medicare Toll-Free number at 1-800-633-4227 and ask for the phone number of the State Health Insurance Program for the state of interest to you.

### **Innovative Website Helps Seniors Take Medicines Safely**

How can seniors remember details about all of the medicines that the doctor has prescribed for them? Answers to this and other questions about the safe use of medicines now are only a mouse click away on the senior-friendly government Web site called *NIHSeniorHealth*. The Web site has clear, reliable information about medicines, taking medications safely, and research to develop tomorrow's medicines. People age 65 and older take more prescription and over-the-counter medicines than any other age group. Older people as a group tend to have more long-term, chronic illnesses such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. One of the fastest growing age groups using the Internet, older Americans increasingly turn to the World Wide Web for health information. In fact, 66 percent of "wired" seniors surf for health and medical information when they go online. *NIHSeniorHealth*, a joint effort of the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, was designed especially with seniors in mind. For the full story go to: (url to be inserted) or for more information visit: [www.nihseniorhealth.gov](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov).

### **Diabetes Information Debuts on Senior-Friendly Web Site**

Getting diabetes information just got easier and is only a mouse click away on an innovative government Web site geared especially toward seniors called *NIHSeniorHealth*. Web users who log onto *NIHSeniorHealth.gov* can find out about diabetes causes and prevention, symptoms and diagnosis, treatment and research. They can discover how lifestyle changes can reduce older adults' risk of developing

diabetes by more than 70 percent. And if they are among the eight million older Americans who have diabetes, they can find tips on how diet and physical activity can help prevent heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, and other serious complications of the disease. NIHSeniorHealth, a joint effort of the National Institute on Aging and the National Library of Medicine, was designed especially with seniors in mind. For more information go to: [www.nihseniorhealth.gov](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov).

### **NDEP Launches Prevention Campaign for Older Adults**

The National Diabetes Education Program of the National Institute of Diabetes, and Digestive, and Kidney Diseases launched its diabetes prevention campaign for older adults, *It's not too Late to Prevent Diabetes: Take Your First Step Today* on January 18. The campaign promotes the message that healthy eating and moderate exercise are particularly effective in preventing diabetes among people over 60. The campaign includes print and radio public service announcements, a tip sheet for people at risk for diabetes, and other educational materials. For more information, visit <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/welcome/releases/01-18-05.htm>.

### **Making a Difference**

#### **Medicare Patrol Accomplishments**

AoA Funded Senior Medicare Patrol Projects continue to yield a savings to Medicare. These projects recruit retired professionals to educate and assist Medicare beneficiaries in detecting and reporting fraud, waste, and abuse in the Medicare Program. According to the latest performance information from the Assistant Inspector General for Evaluation and Inspections, the 57 projects educated nearly 248,000 beneficiaries in more than 82,500 training and one on one sessions during the first six months of 2004, resulting in thousands of dollars recouped to Medicare, saved by the Medicaid program, or saved by Medicare beneficiaries. In total, during the seven years since its inception, the projects have educated more than 1.8 million beneficiaries in 455,412 training and one-on-one sessions. Total savings to the Medicare program attributable to the projects are \$3.9 million. Self-reported savings to beneficiaries, Medicaid, and other payers approximated \$100 million. For more information visit: <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-02-04-00360.pdf>.

### **Of Interest**

#### **AoA to Actively Participate in Upcoming ASA/NCOA Joint Conference**

Mark your calendar to attend the exciting AoA sponsored sessions at the upcoming 2005 Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging and the National Council on the Aging in Philadelphia March 10 – 13. Dr. Mark McClellan, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Assistant Secretary will address the role of the National Aging Services Network in promoting long-term living among older adults as a speaker for the plenary session, *Federal Policy Directions in Health and Long Term Care for Elders*. AoA also is sponsoring a number of pre-conference and conference sessions on long term care, caregiving, health promotion and Disease Prevention, elder rights, and more. AoA is pleased to participate as a Platinum sponsor for this conference. For a complete list of AoA sessions and speakers go to: <http://www.aoa.gov/press/events/ASA-NCOA2005AoA2.pdf>. For more information about the conference visit:



<http://www.agingconference.org>.

### **2000 Special Tabulation on Aging Now Available**

A new special tabulation provides much more detail on the older population aged 60+ than is available from other Census sources. Part A of The Special Tabulation on Aging (STA) is a set of 116 population tables which were tabulated by the Census Bureau for AoA from the Census 2000 sample long form data. The topics covered in these tabulations include age, sex, race, Hispanic or Latino origin, marital status, income, poverty, disability, and much more. The data are organized by individual tables. Each table includes data for a state (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico) and data are shown for a number of geographical levels: U.S. (50 states +DC), state, Planning and Service Area (the geographic area served by a single area agency on aging), county, county subdivision in 12 states with a population of 2,500 or more, place with a population of 2,500 or more, census tract, as well as American Indian and Alaska Native areas. Also, the urban and rural components of states and PSAs are shown. The data are in the form of Excel tables. A menu assists users to select the information that they want. The technical documentation provides extensive details about such topics as the tabulation specifications, the geographical levels shown, how to use the statistical tables, and the measures used to protect confidentiality. The Special Tabulation on Aging is available on the AoA web site at: <http://www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/Tab/specialtab.htm> This product may also be obtained on DVD or CD by contacting the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging (NACDA) by email at: [NACDA@icpsr.umich.edu](mailto:NACDA@icpsr.umich.edu) or by telephone at: 734-615-9516.

### **Why the Net May Replace Ma Bell: A Guide for State Aging Service Systems**

The AoA funded National Aging Information & Referral Support Center has released a document designed to assist state aging service systems in understanding recent advances in telephone communication technology. Internet Voice, also known as Voice over Internet Protocol, VoIP, or IP telephony, allows people to make telephone calls anywhere in the world using a high speed Internet connected computer as a phone. The market for VoIP is growing rapidly. Within the next two to three years, if not before, there is a good chance all aging service systems will be either considering, or utilizing VoIP. The *VoIP Primer Voice Over Internet Protocol, Why the Net May Replace Ma Bell: A Guide for State Aging Service Systems* is a basic primer on VoIP - a starting point to understanding the new technology. For a copy of the primer visit <http://www.nasua.org/informationandreferral/pdf/VOIPPRIMER.pdf>

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### **About AoA**

AoA works with a nationwide network of organizations and service providers to make support services and resources available to older persons and their caregivers. For more information about AoA, please contact us by mail at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging, Washington, DC 20201; by phone at (202) 619-0724; by e-mail at [aoainfo@aoa.gov](mailto:aoainfo@aoa.gov); or visit us on the Web at [www.aoa.gov](http://www.aoa.gov).

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